(a) 'Prisons' is a State subject as per the Constitution of India. As such, priosn management is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government has been stressing upon the State Governments the need to improve the conditions in jails and make them truly corrective and reformative institutions. The Central Government has also been providing financial assistance to the State Governments, through the awards of the Finance Commission as well as under the Central Scheme for Modernisation of Prison Administration, to supplement their efforts in this direction. Further the Central Government has prepared a draft Model Prison (Management) Bill and circulated the same to all the State Governments. This Bill is in tune with modern penological thinking.

(b) According to the information contained in the Annual Reports of the National Human Rights Commission, the number of deaths that occurred in judicial custody during the years 1994-95 to 1998-99 was 2992.

(c) No such information is maintained at the Central level.

Naxal Menace

2785. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether in the context of recent Naxalites' attacks and blasts in Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has called upon the Central Government to take the growing Naxal menace as national problem not a State-problem or an inter-State menace;

(b) whether as many as 23 security personnel including an IPS officer were killed in a blast triggered by the Naxals near Narayanpur in Bastar district on Feb. 20, 2000 close on heals of the killing of the State Transport Minister in Balaghat in December last; and

(c) what is the Central Government's response and reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO) :

(a) Keeping in view the overall dimensions which the left wing extremism has assumed, the Union Home Minister had called a meeting of the Chief Ministers of the affected States on 4-4-2000 to review the overall situation and to discuss further measures required to be taken in this regard. The Chief Ministers of the affected States expressed their serious concern in the matter and urged for Central assistance.

(b) Yes Sir. However, the killed Additional Superintendent of Police in the Narayanpur incident was a State Police Service Officer.

(c) The Central Government has set up a Coordination Centre, headed by the Union Home Secretary with Chief Secretaries and Directors General of Police of the States seriously affected by left wing extremism, as its members, to review and coordinate the steps taken by these States to check extremist activities, monitor the plan of action in respect of each State and to make recommendations both on development and security aspects of the problem.

The Coordination Centre has been meeting periodically. Several important decisions such as providing financial support from the Centre for combating left wing extremist activities, construction/improvement of identified critical roads, preparation of plans for development of affected areas to tackle the problem in a holistic manner, sharing of intelligence inputs on constant basis, providing help of para-military forces on need basis etc. have also been taken and effectively followed-up.

The affected States are also being given financial assistance under the Scheme for Modernisation of State Police Forces and 50% of the expenditure incurred by the States in combating left wing extremist activities, is also being reimbursed to the States under the Scheme for reimbursement of Security Related Expenditure.

Encounter Death in U.P.

2786. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item captioned "College girl dies in U.P. encounter" appeared in The Indian Express dated 16th January, 2000 due to mistaken indentity by policemen;

(b) whether such incidents of mistaken identity had happened in the past by the policemen all over the country;

(c) whether the Central Government would draw a detailed code for adherence by the policemen on duty before resorting to fire so as to avoid the cases of mistaken identity;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?